

# **Manual of Braille Music Notation**

**American Edition, 1988  
1993 International Supplement**

**Compiled Under the Authority of the  
BRAILLE AUTHORITY OF  
NORTH AMERICA**

**Adopted 1992**

**AMERICAN PRINTING HOUSE FOR THE BLIND**

**Louisville, Kentucky 40206-0085**

**1993**

**7-77001-00**



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**BRAILLE AUTHORITY OF NORTH AMERICA**

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MANUAL OF BRAILLE MUSIC NOTATION  
AMERICAN EDITION, 1988

1993 International Supplement

PREFACE

This 1993 International Supplement to the MANUAL OF BRAILLE MUSIC NOTATION AMERICAN EDITION, 1988, is the result of international co-operation over a period of more than ten years. Correspondence during this time, small group meetings and three larger international meetings culminated in February, 1992, when representatives of fifteen countries reached agreements in Saanen, Switzerland, on the basic braille music code. At the same time they called for a new international manual of braille music to be prepared.

The Music Technical Committee of Bana participated at all stages. Two members, Mrs. Bettye Krolick and Mr. Tom Ridgeway attended the final meeting. The work done for the 1981 American Addendum of the REVISED INTERNATIONAL MANUAL OF BRAILLE MUSIC NOTATION, 1956, was extremely important internationally. It formed the basis of agreements on Short-form Scoring. The American method brought international agreement in this area for the first time and helped pave the way for agreements in Theory, Harmony and Figured Bass.

This text was presented to BANA in November, 1992, and received their official approval.

FOREWORD

The function of this International Supplement to the MANUAL OF BRAILLE MUSIC NOTATION AMERICAN EDITION, 1988, is to bring the American code into accord with international braille music agreements.

The main objectives of the international work were clarity, simplicity and faithfulness to the print text. Many complex signs, such as a "soft pedal" sign, were defeated because the print uses text rather than a symbol. The agreement to follow print text enabled countries to accept the American system for Chord Symbols (Short-Form Scoring). In some cases compromises were made, including a return to the former method of writing clef signs in braille.

In this International Supplement, all of the changes are included in the Tables of Signs. The international agreements, almost exclusively, concerned signs rather than formats or rules. The

supplement also contains corrected versions of examples and paragraphs affected by the new signs. A short additional section contains explanations for new signs.

Work will always continue as music publishers continue to present challenges. The BANA Music Technical Committee chairs the international working group on Modern Music Notation. Other unfinished business awaits action by international working committees. Hopefully the next addition to the code will also be the result of a combination of international agreements and approval by BANA. Musicians can proudly take advantage of the fact that the music code of braille is now, truly international.

BANA Music Technical Committee  
Bettye Krolick  
George Bennette  
Sandra W. Kelly  
Beverly McKenney  
Thomas Ridgeway

**1993 International Supplement to  
Manual of Braille Music Notation  
American Edition, 1988**




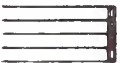

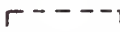



The following changes and additions to the official code of music braille were adopted by the Board of the Braille Authority of North America on November 7, 1992. Implementation of the changes is effective as of March, 1993.






















**Part One  
Changes to existing Tables, Paragraphs and Examples**

- \* Change of sign
- \*\* Change of wording
- @ Addition to code

Tables are provided in complete sections for accurate reference.

**GENERAL TABLE**

Print bar line (space)	⠠⠨	
Bar line for unusual circumstances	⠠⠨⠠	
Print dotted bar line	⠠⠨⠠⠨	
** Double bar at end of a composition	⠠⠨⠠⠨⠠	
** Double bar at end of a measure or section	⠠⠨⠠⠨⠠⠨	
@ Double bar at end of a section if the measure is incomplete	⠠⠨⠠⠨⠠⠨⠠	
Prefix for print pagination	⠠⠨⠠⠨	
* Square bracket above the staff	⠠⠨⠠⠨⠠⠨⠠⠨	
* Broken square bracket above the staff	⠠⠨⠠⠨⠠⠨⠠⠨⠠⠨	
@ Square bracket above the staff with unclear ending (facsimile copy)	⠠⠨⠠⠨⠠⠨⠠⠨⠠⠨⠠	
Square bracket below the staff	⠠⠨⠠⠨⠠⠨⠠⠨	
Broken square bracket below the staff	⠠⠨⠠⠨⠠⠨⠠⠨⠠⠨	

@ Square bracket below the staff with unclear ending (facsimile copy)			
@ Small brackets surrounding a single note or feature (facsimile copy)			
Music prefix			
Literary prefix			
Literary comma			
Punctuation indicator			
Braille music hyphen			
Braille music comma			
Terminal braille music comma			
Coincidence of notes in both hands			
Prefix for added signs in braille music text (facsimile copy)			
Fingernail in harp music			
* Cross for wind instruments			
* Circle for wind instruments			

NOTES to General Table  
[No change except the following]

\*\* 11. An octave sign is not required following the signs for a cross or a circle above or below the note.













**Table 1**

**NOTES AND NOTE VALUES**  
(Par. 1-8)

[No change to standard notation]

**Modern Notation**

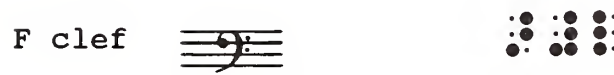
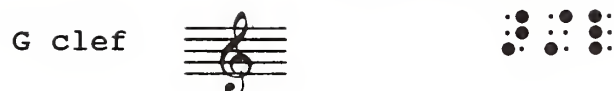
Note-head only, filled-in		
X-shaped note-head		
Note of indeterminate or approximate pitch		
Diamond-shaped note-head		
@ Approximate pitch at end of slanted line (used when necessary)		


\*\* ["Modern" sign for whole note was eliminated. Use standard sign.]

Table 3

\* CLEF SIGNS

(Par. 18-19)



When it is necessary to show the line on which the clef is placed, the sign  is preceded by an octave mark (Table 2) thus:



Where a clef, such as the G clef, has a small 8 shown above or below it, indicating an octave higher or lower than usual, the following signs are used:



(For modified clef signs, see Table 17.)

Table 5

ACCIDENTALS AND KEY SIGNATURES

(Par. 24-32)

Sharp			Key signatures:		
Double sharp			Three sharps		
Flat			Three flats		
Double flat			Four sharps		
Natural			Four flats		
@ 1/4 step alteration					
@ 3/4 step alteration					
(See Ex. 324.)					

Accidentals above or below a note (See Ex. 195)

(For changes of key, see Ex. 14)

Table 6

(A) SPECIMEN TIME OR METER SIGNATURES

(Par. 33-41)


[No change to part (B).]


Four-four time	$\frac{4}{4}$		Combined time signatures:	$\frac{3}{9}$
			Three-four, nine-eight	$\frac{4}{8}$
Six-eight time	$\frac{6}{8}$			
Twelve-sixteen time	$\frac{12}{16}$			
C	C		*	$\frac{4}{4}$
C barred	¢		*	$\frac{3}{8}$

**Table 17**


**HAND SIGNS**  
(Par. 196-207)

(A) FOR KEYBOARD


Right hand 


Left hand 

@ Right hand when intervals read up   
(unusual)


@ Left hand when intervals read down   
(unusual)


Modified Clef Signs

\* Bass clef in the right-hand part 

\* Treble clef in the left-hand part 

(B) FOR PERCUSSION

Right hand 



Left hand 



**Table 20**



**NUANCES**  
(Par. 232-248)

(A) SYMBOLS

[No changes to Section (B)]

A dot above or below a note    
(staccato)

A pear-shaped dot above or below    
a note (staccatissimo)

A dot under a short line above a    
note (mezzo-staccato)

A short line above or below a note  
(agogic accent)



A thin horizontal V above or below a note (accent)



@ A reversed accent mark above or below a note



A thick inverted or normal V above or below a note



Fermata (pause) over or under a note



between notes



above a bar line



with squared shape



tent-shaped



A comma





(This braille sign is used for (1) a single or double short vertical line between notes, (2) two short parallel oblique lines between notes, (3) an upright or inverted wedge between notes.)



A vertical wavy line or curve through one staff (arpeggio)






The same through two staves (marked in all parts in both hands)



Diverging and converging lines (swell)  
















Accelerando within rhythmic group  

Retard within rhythmic group  

Termination of rhythmic group 

**Table 21**

**ORGAN PEDALLING**  
(Par. 260-262)

Left toe			Right toe		
Left heel			Right heel		
Organ pedals			Change of feet (left to right, or toe to heel, etc.)		
* Crossing of foot in front			* Change without indication of toe or heel		
* Crossing of foot behind					
@ Start of passage where left hand and pedal parts are printed on the same staff (facsimile copy)					
@ Return of left hand alone on staff (facsimile) copy					



**Table 23**

**MUSIC FOR STRINGED INSTRUMENTS**

(Par. 328-377)

[No changes for sections (A) (B) (C) (D) (F) & (G)]

(E) Miscellaneous




































Pizzicato for right hand (pizz.)	
Pizzicato for left hand (X)	
Arco (thus in print)	
Glissando (a line between two adjacent notes)	
Open string and natural harmonic (a cipher)	
* Artificial harmonic (a diamond-shaped note)	
Shift or glide to a new position (a straight line between two note heads)	
Single sign	
Opening and closing signs	
Opening	
Closing	
Mute or damp (variously indicated in print, usually a small encircled x)	
Rhythmic strumming (oblique line)	
(See Par. 415.)	

Table 24  
SHORT-FORM SCORING AMERICAN SYSTEM  
(Par. 378-417)

Plus (+)	
Minus (-)	
Small circle (o)	
Circle bisected by line (ø)	
Slash line between letters (/)	
Parentheses ( )	

The following is a list of representative chord symbols

Dm	
E♭	
D♭/A♭	
Dmaj7	
G6/D	
F#dim7	
F#°7	
F#7	
C7sus	
Dm(#7)	
B7-9	
Gmaj7+9	
B+	
B7(-9)	
B♭°	
B♭°7	
A♭maj7 <sup>+9</sup> <sub>♭5</sub>	
*@ D7( <sup>♭5</sup> <sub>9</sub> )	

\*@ Change in order of numerals



## 1993 International Supplement

# Errata Sheet

Page 12, Table 24 - Replacement for the final two chord symbols

\*@ Abmaj7<sup>+9</sup><sub>b5</sub>

\*@ D7(<sup>b5</sup>)

\*@ Change in order of numerals

Page 28 - Replacement for Ex. S1.

**Ex. S1.**

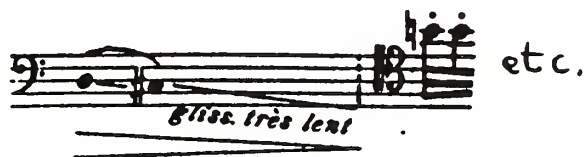

































Table 25

MUSIC FOR THE ACCORDION  
Par. 418-427)

First row of buttons (dash below note)			Draw (V pointing left) <	
Second row (no indication)			Push (V pointing right) >	
Third row (1 or m)			Bass solo (B.S.)	
Fourth row (2 or M)			Register	
Fifth row (3, 7 or S)			Without register	
Sixth row (4 or d)			Prefix for accordion music	

@ Accordion Registration

Circle with a dot over the two cross lines; 4 ft.		
Circle with a dot between the two cross-lines; 8 ft.		
Circle with a dot below the two cross-lines; 16 ft.		
Circle with a dot over, one between and one below the 2 cross-lines; 4 ft. 8 ft. 16 ft.		
Circle with a dot over the two cross-lines and one between; 4 ft. 8 ft.		
Circle with a dot between the two cross-lines and one below; 8 ft. 16 ft.		
Circle with a dot over the two cross lines and one below; 4 ft. 16 ft.		

Two horizontal dots between the cross-lines; "tremolo"



A little circle above; "high" tremolo"



A little circle below; "low" tremolo"



Example of combination with more tremolos



Table 27

**FIGURED BASS**  
(Par. 473-499)

Indication of figures

Print            0            2            3            etc.

Braille        ⠠⠨        ⠠⠠        ⠠⠠⠠

Blank space replacing a figure



\* Isolated accidental #



Horizontal line of continuation \_\_\_\_\_



Two lines of continuation \_\_\_\_\_



Three lines of continuation \_\_\_\_\_



Oblique stroke replacing a figure /



Oblique stroke above or through a figure 7



Prefix for figured bass



Distinction of meaning before signs



Plus (+)

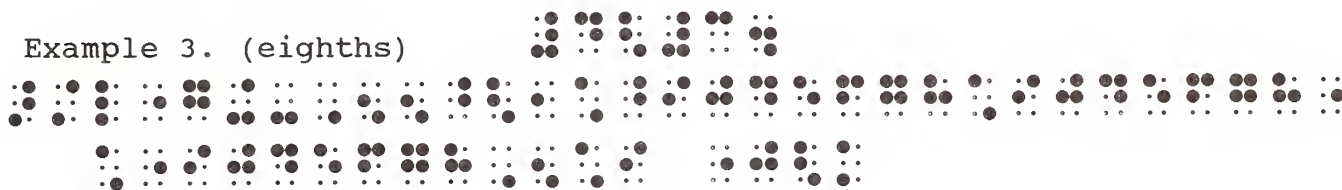


[Brackets indicate which signs have been changed.]

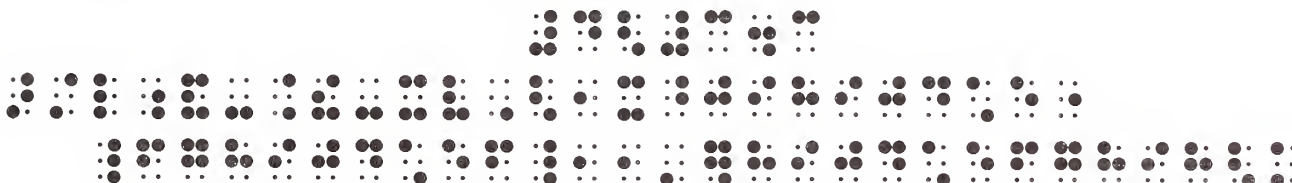
## I. Notes and Note-Values

[Clef signs]

Example 3. (eighths)



Example 4. (128ths and 64ths)



7. Modern notation sometimes includes note-heads of unusual shape indicating either time span or special effects. In braille the shapes are indicated as shown in Table 1. When no specific note value appears, the value of an eighth-note is used. "Note-heads only" have no stems and are filled in (like quarters and smaller values). Notes of "indeterminate or approximate pitch" usually are stem sign with no note-heads. For an example of approximate pitch at the end of a slanting line, see Ex. S1 in this supplement.

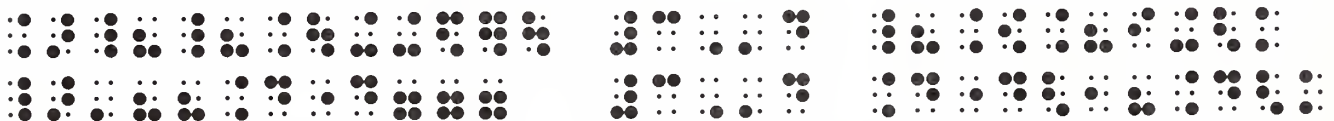
The print instruction for this organ music excerpt states that an open note-head "equals longer duration" and a filled-in note head "equals shorter duration." Because an open note-head and a whole note are identical in print, they are identical in braille.



Example 15 (A) (instrumental music)  
[Clef sign]



34. Meter indications that contain note values have a music prefix preceding the note value, which is written as the note C.



## XVI. Repeats

[Square brackets]

Example 152

Example 152 displays musical notation for a piece featuring repeats. The notation is presented in two formats: Braille and staff notation. The Braille notation is arranged in two lines, with the first line containing a repeat sign (two dots) and the second line containing the musical notation. The staff notation is written on a single staff, showing a melody with a repeat sign (two dots) and a fermata. The notation is in 4/4 time, with a key signature of one sharp (F#).

## XVII. Modified Clef Signs

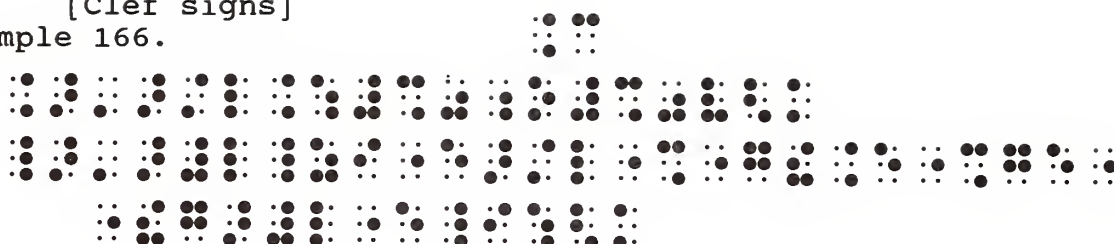
[Clef signs]

Example 165.

Example 165 displays musical notation for a piece featuring modified clef signs. The notation is presented in two formats: Braille and staff notation. The Braille notation is arranged in two lines, with the first line containing a modified clef sign (two dots) and the second line containing the musical notation. The staff notation is written on a single staff, showing a melody with a modified clef sign (two dots) and a fermata. The notation is in 4/4 time, with a key signature of one sharp (F#).



[Clef signs]  
Example 166.



## XXI. Organ Music (Table 21)

260. The indications for pedalling, including those for the changing of feet, are treated in the same manner as that already explained for fingering (Par. 115-119). When a change of feet is

indicated without specifying either toe or heel, the sign  $\begin{smallmatrix} \bullet & \bullet \\ \vdots & \vdots \end{smallmatrix}$  is placed after the note on which the change occurs.

261. The crossing of one foot in front of the other is indicated by placing the sign  $\begin{smallmatrix} \bullet & \bullet \\ \vdots & \vdots \end{smallmatrix}$  before the note to be played by the crossing foot. If the crossing is behind, the sign  $\begin{smallmatrix} \bullet & \bullet \\ \vdots & \vdots \end{smallmatrix}$  is similarly used.

Example 209.



266. In facsimile transcriptions, when the pedal and left-hand parts are written on the same print staff, the combined prefix from Table 20 is used for the first measure of the passage and the parts are placed in separate in-accords. The normal left hand prefix is used for succeeding parallels. When the pedal part drops out, if it is not obvious from the music itself, the prefix  $\begin{smallmatrix} \bullet & \bullet \\ \vdots & \vdots \end{smallmatrix}$  is used once.



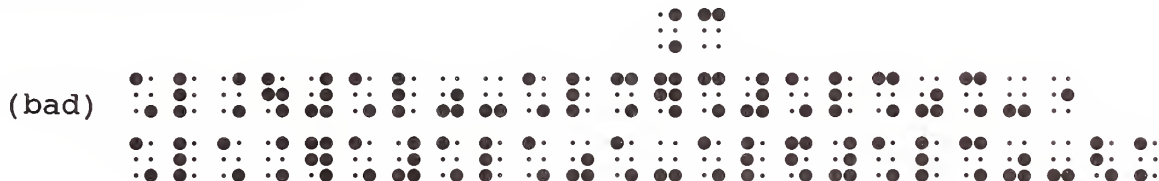
### XXIII. Music for Stringed Instruments

[Artificial harmonics in Exs. 256-257, 260]

Example 256. (Violoncello)



Example 257. (violin)



(good)



Example 260.



360. An exception occurs in music written for classical guitar, wherever fingering for the right hand appears. The right-hand fingering is represented in print and in braille by the letters p, i, m, a and c. The letters are brailled without letter signs or capitals. (See Table 23 (D)). If two letters (such as "ch") are used to represent the ring finger (c), the letter "x" is used in braille.

[Arpeggio down]  
Example 270.

376. Harmonics are written in various ways in guitar music. The print shape determines the sign to be used in braille. The sign for an artificial harmonic is used only when the note is diamond-shaped, and the natural harmonic sign is used only when there are circles over the notes. All text or abbreviations should be included as printed.

#### XXIV. Short-Form Scoring

393. The number sign is brailled before every number. In a vertical arrangement of numbers, the lower number is brailled first; in a horizontal arrangement, the print copy is followed.

Example 303.

## XXV. Music for the Accordion

418. The signs for accordion music only bear their special significance when the passage is preceded by the prefix given in Table 25, which is treated in the same manner already explained for hand signs. (Par. 197-198). For accordion registration signs, see Table 25 and par. S5 in this supplement.

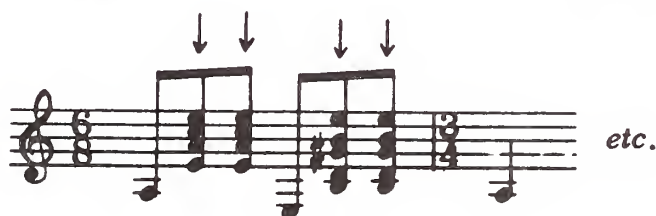
## XXVI. Orchestral Scores

455. In music for the harp and other plucked instruments, the bowing and plectrum signs given in Table 23 are sometimes used to indicate the direction in which arpeggios are to be played (from bass to treble or vice versa). (See Ex. 322.) These plectrum signs may also be employed to represent the directional arrows and lines for arpeggiation in piano or guitar music; the plectrum signs would precede the arpeggio sign.

456. Plectrum signs may also be used to show slight risings and fallings of single pitches, but when text indicates  $\frac{1}{4}$  or  $\frac{3}{4}$  tone alteration, the signs from Table 5 are employed. In Example 324, a footnote indicated the  $\frac{1}{4}$  tone alteration.

[Arpeggio down]

Example 323.



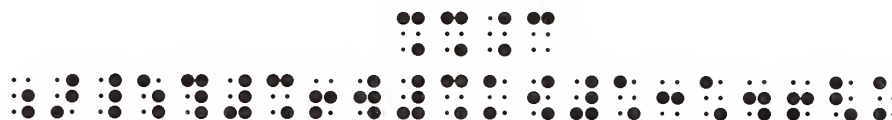
[1/4-step sharp]

Example 324.

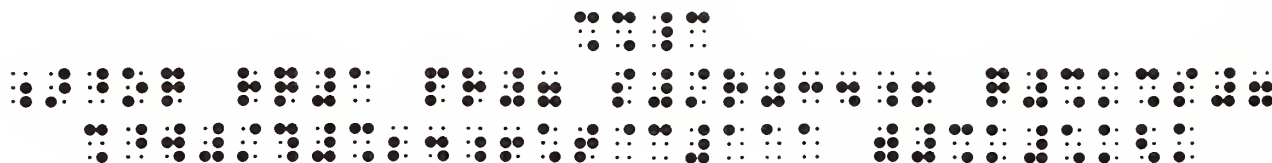


## XXVII. Figured Bass

[Isolated accidentals in Exs. 333, 335-336, 339-340, 342-345]  
Example 333.

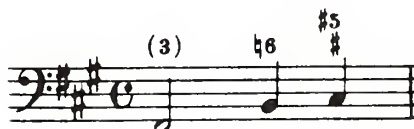


Example 335.

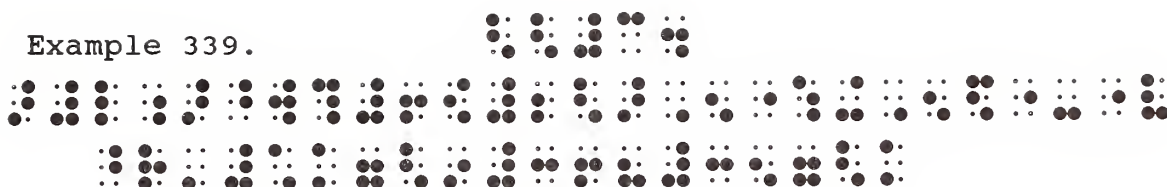


483. The sign for the braille music parenthesis (Table 19) is as follows. Also see Par. S6 and Ex. S2 in this supplement.

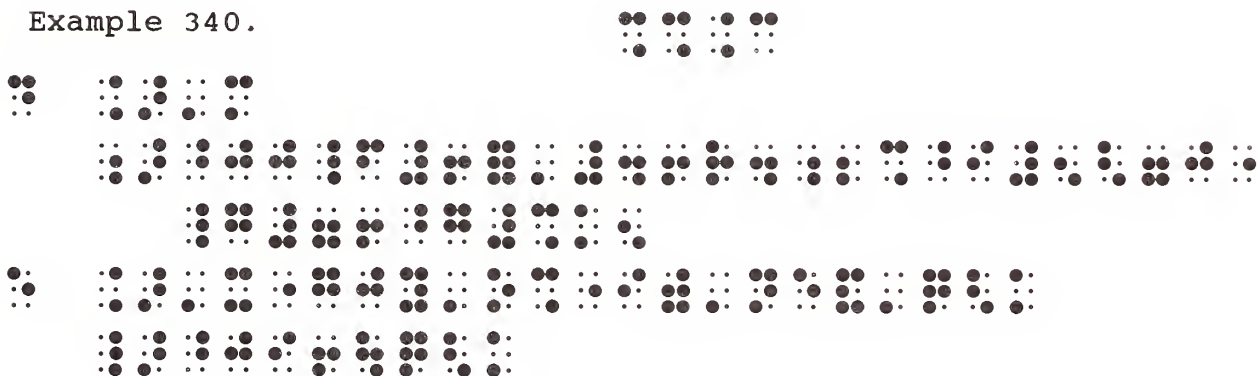
Example 336.



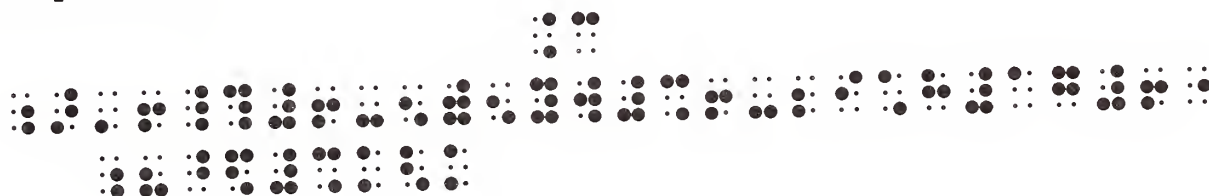
Example 339.



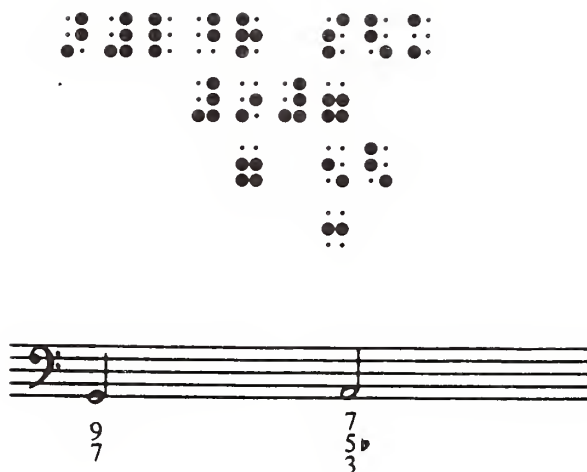
Example 340.



Example 342.

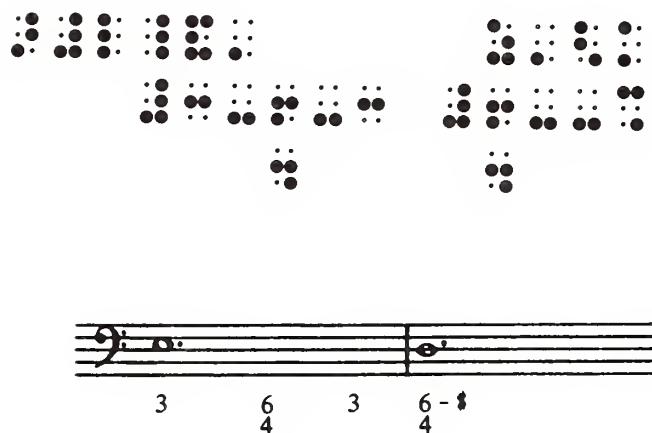


Example 343.



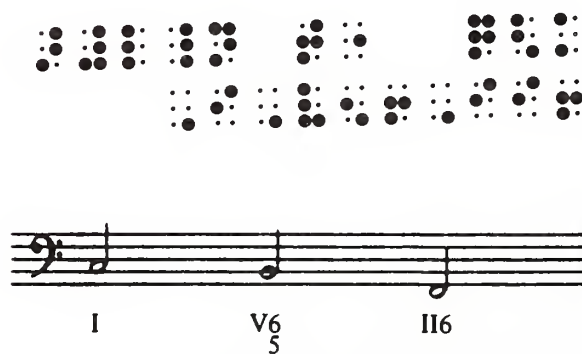
Example 343 shows a musical staff with two measures. The first measure contains a whole note chord with a 9/7 figured bass. The second measure contains a whole note chord with a 7/5/3 figured bass. Above the staff, there are two rows of dot notation representing the chord structures. The first row has three groups of dots, and the second row has two groups of dots.

Example 344.



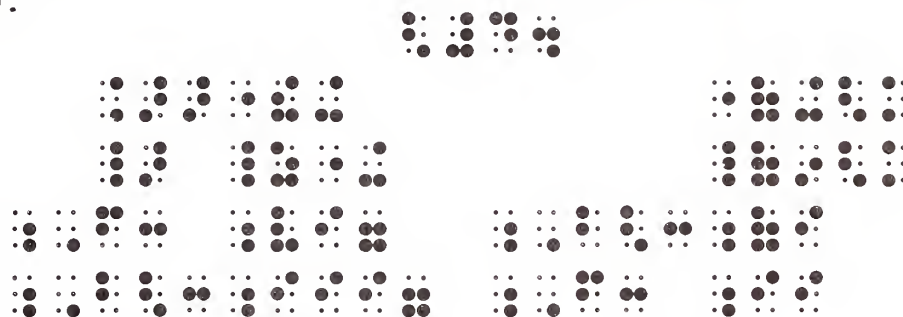
Example 344 shows a musical staff with two measures. The first measure contains a whole note chord with a 3/6/4 figured bass. The second measure contains a whole note chord with a 3/6/4 figured bass. Above the staff, there are two rows of dot notation representing the chord structures. The first row has three groups of dots, and the second row has two groups of dots.

Example 345.



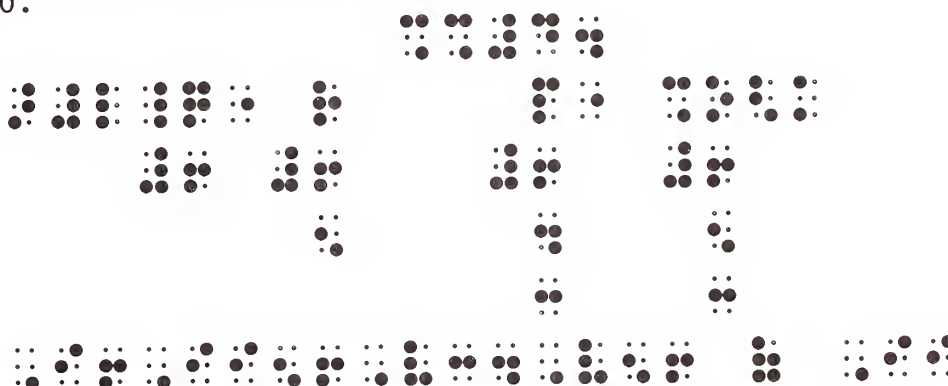
Example 345 shows a musical staff with three measures. The first measure contains a whole note chord with a I figured bass. The second measure contains a whole note chord with a V6/5 figured bass. The third measure contains a whole note chord with a II6 figured bass. Above the staff, there are two rows of dot notation representing the chord structures. The first row has three groups of dots, and the second row has three groups of dots.

[Right-hand prefix with intervals reading up]  
 Example 349.



F: vi7      Bb: vi  
 Bb: iii7    F: ii

[Clef signs. Exs. 350-354, 360]  
 Example 350.



6      6      6      6  
      5      4      5      3  
      3      3      3      3  
 I6    II6    V4    V6 of II  
      5      3      5

Example 351.



I6      V7      I  
      4      +      +



Example 352.

5 6  
3 4+  
2

6  
4

6+  
4  
3

(General Examples)  
Example 353.

7 6

4 7 4 3 - 7

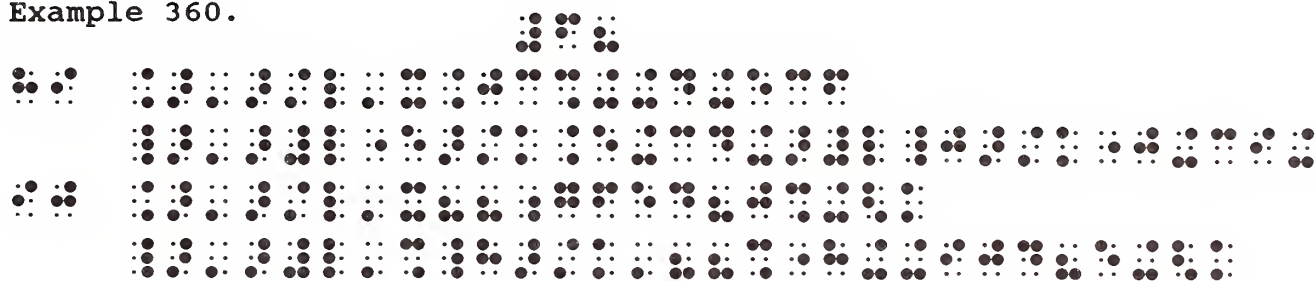
7 - 6  
5 - 3

Example 354.

6 5 4 6 7<sup>b</sup> 7 6 4 6 5



Example 360.



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American Edition, 1988

**Part Two: New Paragraphs and Examples**

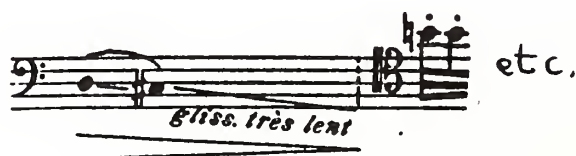
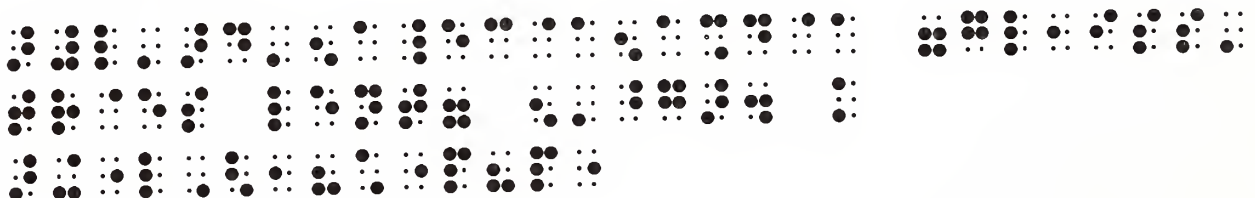
S1. As with the other signs in the manual, new international signs should be used wherever the specific print signs appear. For example, the print signs for downward arpeggio and the modern notation for a slanted line with an indefinite end are shown in Section XXIII, Music for Stringed Instruments, but they may also be found in keyboard publications. The braille solutions apply to both types of instruments.

S2. **Section V, Accidentals.** There is no standard print notation for 1/4 and 3/4 sharps or flats. Among other possibilities are a backward flat sign, a sharp sign with one or three vertical lines instead of two, and arrows going up or down. When publisher's notes make the meaning clear, those notes should be included in the transcription and the new signs from Table 5 are placed in the braille music line.

S3. **Section XX, Nuances.** The reversed accent sign (Table 20) is rarely used in print. Some braille references use it when referring to smorzando. If that word or the abbreviation, smorz., appears, they must be transcribed as text. Only use the new sign if a reversed accent sign (pointing left) appears in print.

S4. **Section XXIII, Music for String Instruments.** In Ex. S1 the end of the slanting line is only an approximate pitch. If a time value indication had been given, it would have been included as a value sign or with an indication in an in-accord part. The small-value sign precedes the thirty-second notes after the dotted bar line in the absence of a time signature.

Ex. S1.



S5. **Section XXV, Music for the Accordion.** Signs for accordion registration symbols are now shown in Table 25. If other registration symbols appear, similar signs should be devised and described in a T.N. The registration is placed directly in the line of music and is followed immediately by the next music character.

S6. **Section XXVII, Figured Bass.** In facsimile copy a distinction should be made between parentheses and brackets. When brackets appear around a single note or feature, use the sign from the General Table, as shown in Ex. S2. In non-facsimile transcriptions, music parentheses may be used as in Ex. 336.

Example S2.

The example shows a musical staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody consists of the notes: D4, E4, F#4, G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4. Above the staff, Braille registration symbols are placed: a single dot 2 for the first measure, a single dot 3 for the second, a single dot 4 for the third, a single dot 5 for the fourth, a single dot 6 for the fifth, a single dot 7 for the sixth, a single dot 8 for the seventh, a single dot 9 for the eighth, a single dot 10 for the ninth, a single dot 11 for the tenth, a single dot 12 for the eleventh, and a single dot 13 for the twelfth. Below the staff, the figured bass notation is: 6 6 7 [8]6.

S7. **Vocal Music, Other Formats.** A final set of signs that has been approved internationally is included here for reference.

- •  
⋮ ⋮ Slur for first language
- •  
⋮ ⋮ Slur for second language
- •  
⋮ ⋮ Slur for third language
- •  
⋮ ⋮ Slur for fourth language

These are used in formats other than bar-over-bar. According to this manual, two languages may be written at one time. See Par. 299 for solo voice and Par. 311 for ensemble music. Additional languages are transcribed separately.





